



RIEEA

Rhode Island Environmental
Education Association

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On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association

In Support of H-7501 - BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

House Committee on Finance

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports H-7501, and respectfully urges its passage. This bill would provide much needed funding to the essential but **severely under-resourced** environmental education programs throughout the state.

The RIEEA membership, which includes more than 400 individuals and more than 70 organizations¹, deeply understands the value of out-of-school time learning. Environmental education (EE) takes place during after school programs, vacation and summer camps, and family events, and provides transformative learning experiences that result in far more than just knowledge gain; it affords K-12 students an opportunity to engage in hands-on learning in real-world settings, doing things they just can't do in a typical classroom. A review by researchers at Stanford University of 119 peer-reviewed studies published over a 20-year period found clear evidence that EE provides a variety of benefits to students² such as an improvement in critical thinking, personal growth, and life-building skills. In addition, many young people are feeling anxiety and despair about their future related to climate change³ and EE can help alleviate these feelings by providing opportunities and agency to develop solutions to mitigate climate change.

I encourage you to pass this important legislation, **H-7501**.

¹ <https://www.rieea.org/about-us/organizational-members/>

² <https://naaee.org/eepro/research/eeworks/student-outcomes>

³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30223-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30223-0/fulltext)